

The intricate tapestries of this artist are an ode to Le Corbusier's concrete works

Artist Antonio Puri's first solo exhibition at Sundaram Tagore Singapore is inspired by his birthplace, Chandigarh

Uma Nair September 21, 2017



Antonio Puri, Dharma Revisited, Sundaram Tagore Singapore

Eastern roots and Western experiences along with art education make India-born, Bogotá-based Antonio Puri an intriguing artist. Puri's evocative as well as spiritual mixed media works will unveil during Gillman Barracks 'Fifth Anniversary Art After Dark' event on September 22 at Sundaram Tagore Gallery, Singapore.

Philadelphia dweller Puri was born in 1966 in Chandigarh and raised in the Himalayas. He studied at the Academy of Art in San Francisco and Coe College, Iowa, and holds a law degree from the University of Iowa.

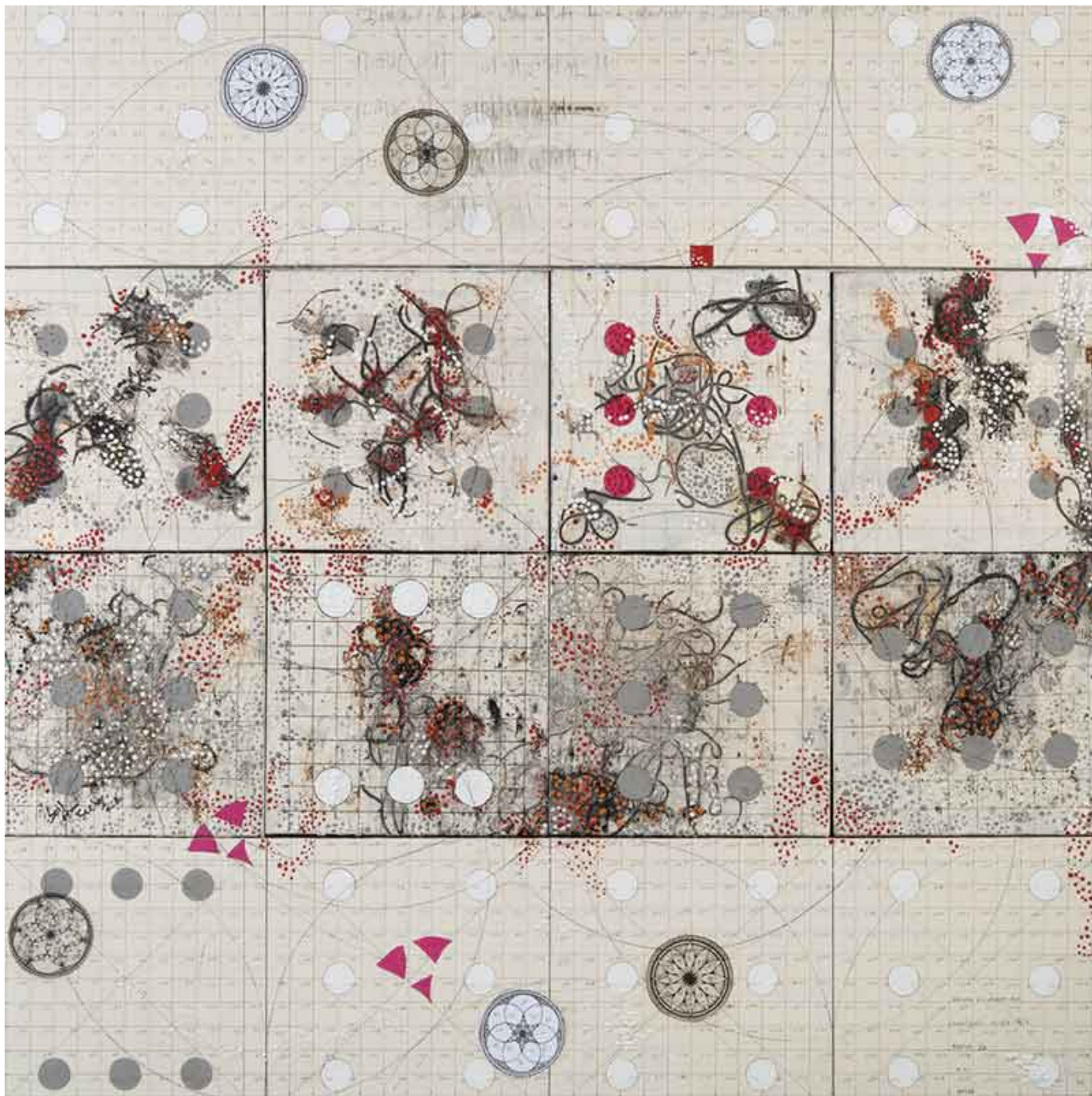


Homage to Le Corbusier His works are intensely minimal, made of layers of muted colour layered over deep textures, with gestural lines and coalescing atmospheric passages. You could think of metaphors as well as transcendental realism fragmented into fractals as in Birth Chart. The layers, the hint of colour spread almost like *sindoor* on a gray carpet sets you thinking about consciousness and transitory states in evolution.

Homage to Le Corbusier and *Dharma Revisited* look more like intricate tapestries with multiple layers of natural pigments, ink, oil, beads, and sand. Puri embeds dreamlike constellations of symbols, grids and maps into his creations while keeping shades of gray as

his scenic backdrop. Into the slate gray used by Corbusier, he ingrains fingerprints, earth tints from Chandigarh, and henna motifs from Himalayan childhood memories.

The predominantly gray palette of the works in the show is a nod to Le Corbusier's monolithic concrete structures in Chandigarh offset by fuchsia bougainvilleas, which had a powerful influence on the artist growing up.

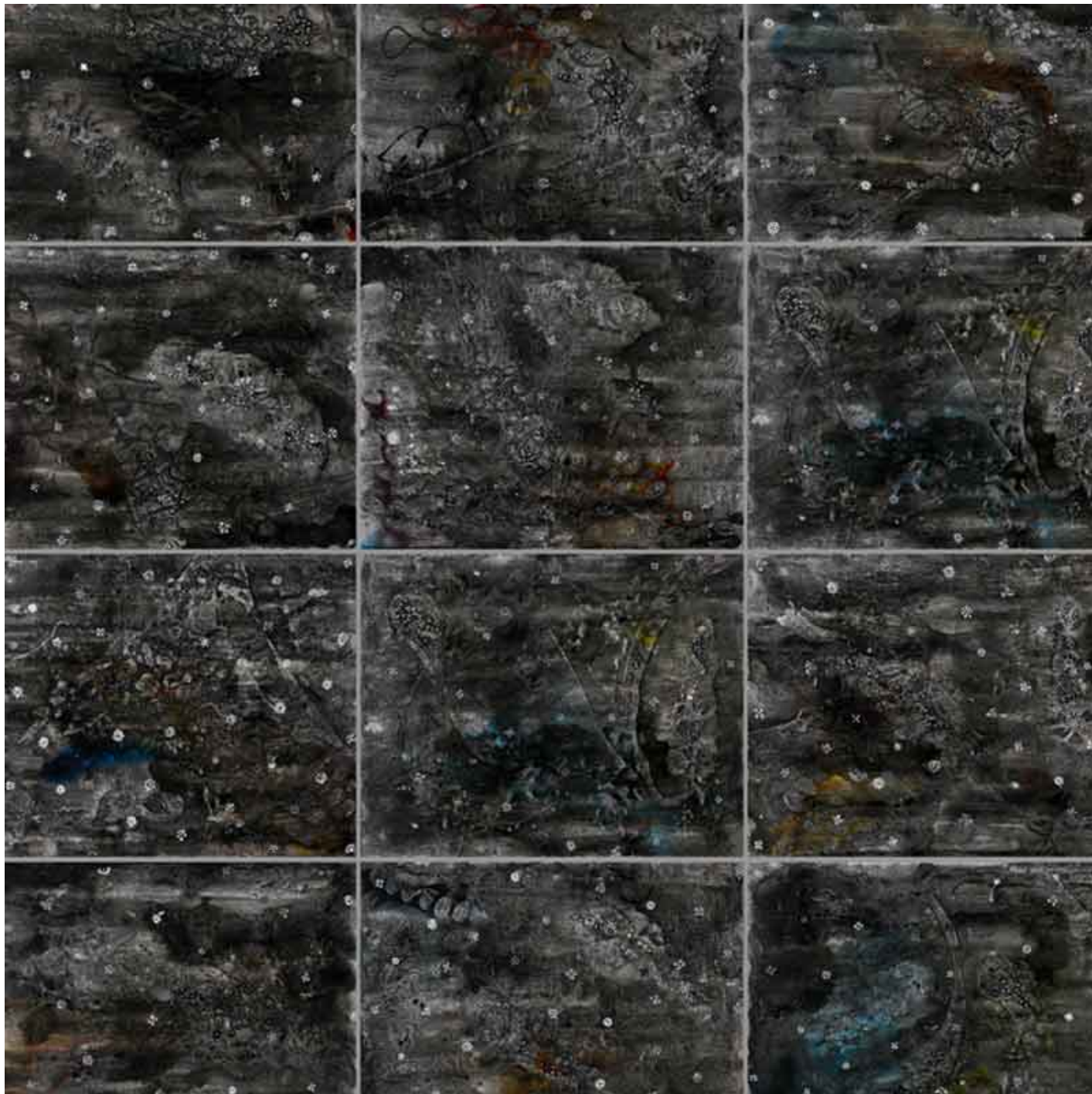


Strings Within Cosmic Worlds

Amongst Puri's mixed media works, what entices are the numberless strings he uses—almost as if he is giving contexts that allude to micro and macrocosmic worlds.

In an interview he is known to have said: “I often use strings in my work to speak to attachment and detachment, the concept of non-dual duality...and it’s this dance between time and timeless or the logical and the intuitive that gives my work its energy.”

Puri explains that he wanted to work with gray tones and unfinished edges to show the beauty of the colour and highlight the timeline of the painting process through the edges.



Dualities and Dichotomies

In this dichotomy, the piece de resistance is *Antashkaran* 2014, a large work composed of identically sized rectangular canvases, each covered in a mud-slug mixture of paint and other texture-rich materials.

Then there is *Mystical Madness*. Another set of grids that hint at a gentle “mitosis,” perhaps a metaphor for the artist’s journey from the Himalayas to America. Within the matrix of minimalism, Puri transforms primordial energies to speak of forces – both within and without – which shaped his sensibilities.

His latest works were created listening to the evocative sounds of a flamenco musician singing in his studio. The works draw on the sensuality of this music as well as the writings of his late grandfather, Lekh Raj Puri, a philosopher who explored the idea of sound and light as the source of our existence. Uncanny how sound and light become a genetic inheritance.



Antonio Puri, Antashkaran 2014, Sundaram Tagore Singapore